

Cobra Brigade holds first formal in unit's history

Story by Spc. Jason Dangel
4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

Soldiers of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division “dressed to the nines” for the Cobra Brigade’s 2007 Spring Formal at the Killen Civic Center April 19.

The mood for the evening was warm and cheerful as participants filed into the ballroom primed to enjoy food, spirits and the company of their comrades, marking the brigade’s first formal occasion event in its short history.

The hosts for the evening’s festivities were Col. Michael Beech, the brigade commander, and his wife, Kathy, and the special guest for the evening was Command Sgt. Maj. John Moody. Lt. Col. Mark Solomons, executive officer, 4th BCT, served as the master of ceremonies.

“All the men and women in this room have a cause for celebration,” Beech said, addressing approximately 600 Soldiers, wives and guests in attendance. “Two-and-a-half years ago, when this brigade was formed, many of the senior leaders in our division and our Army questioned whether or not a brigade so formed could come together, man, equip and deploy to combat in under 12 months.

We not only formed, trained and deployed, but every man and woman in this room formed a tradition of combat victory and success that future generations of Soldiers will try to emulate, and for this, is our reason to celebrate tonight.”

Smiles were abundant, and lively conversation between co-workers and spouses filled the boundaries of the large ballroom but soon stopped for a moment of poignant reflection.

“I propose a toast to our fallen comrades!” Moody shouted.

“Lest we forget!” the room roared back.

Following the dedication, crystal glasses were raised high out of respect for fellow comrades, devoted Families and those who had fought for freedom in the past, present and yet to come.

The mood of the evening lightened as Soldiers and their dates turned their attention to dinner, and candid conversation once again buzzed the air over the hum of light music performed by the 4th Inf. Div. Jazz Band.

“We all went to battle together and saw the serious side of what it is to be a Soldier in the U.S. Army,” Moody said, reflecting on the unit’s time deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom last year.

“Tonight is something special,” he continued. “These are all the guys we went to combat with and the same guys we work with every day. It’s great to have everyone together. This is our Army Family.”

The festivities culminated with a direct order from Beech, as the brigade commander gave the command for all the Soldiers attending the event to dance with their dates before calling it a night. Dance music piped up over the speaker system as Soldiers took to the dance floor with their wives and guests.

“This unit is a great outfit,” said Moody, before the conclusion of the night’s festivities. “I have been in the Army 28 years, and I can honestly say this unit ranks up there with the top two units I have served with in my Army career.”

Moody, who plans to retire later this year, said he is honored to end his career with the Cobra Brigade and will always remember his last brigade formal.

“For me to end here and as I get ready to retire, it makes me proud to end my career here, but it is also bitter sweet because another part of me doesn’t want to go,” Moody said.

“I’m proud of each and every one of my Soldiers, and this day will always hold a special place in my heart, and in the hearts of the Cobra Family.”



Moody cuts cake.

Col. Michael Beech, commander, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, looks on as Command Sgt. Maj. John Moody cuts the official ceremonial cake during the Cobra Brigade Spring Formal April 19.
(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jason Dangel, 4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)



Moody greets Gentile.

Lt. Col. Gian Gentile, commander, 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, greets Command Sgt. Maj. John Moody before entering the ballroom for the 2007 Cobra Brigade Spring Formal at the Killeen Civic Center April 19. The mood for the evening was warm and cheerful as participants filed into the ballroom ready to enjoy food, spirits and the company of their comrades, marking the brigade's first formal occasion event in the unit's short history.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jason Dangel, 4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)



Soldiers take to dance floor.

Cobra Soldiers take to the dance floor during the dance portion of the first ever 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division Formal, held at the Killeen Civic Center April 19.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jason Dangel, 4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)



Color Guard.

Col. Michael Beech, commander, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, posts the color guard during the opening moments of the first Cobra Brigade Spring Formal held at the Killeen Civic Center April 19.
(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jason Dangel, 4BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)